

Lynn's Biography

Lynn Woolsey, an unapologetic progressive and the first former welfare mother to serve in Congress, is in her seventh term as the representative from California's 6th District, just north of San Francisco (including all of Marin and most of Sonoma Counties).

As co-chair of the Congressional Progressive Caucus, Rep. Woolsey is one of the Democrats' most vocal and visible leaders in the House. A passionately outspoken opponent of the Iraq war, she has helped move public opinion against President Bush's Iraq policy. She introduced the first resolution calling for our troops to be brought home and convened the first congressional hearing on military exit strategies. The San Jose Mercury News recently called her "the unofficial matriarch of the [anti-war] movement in Congress."

Rep. Woolsey believes that ending the Iraq war must be the beginning of a complete re-evaluation of U. S. national security policy. She has proposed the Sensible Multilateral American Response to Terrorism (SMART Security), which puts an emphasis on peaceful resolution of international conflict. SMART would keep Americans safe through stronger global alliances and improved intelligence capabilities, as opposed to pre-emptive military strikes. SMART also calls for the United States to live up to its nonproliferation obligations, and it includes an ambitious humanitarian development agenda to address the hopelessness and oppression that give rise to terrorism in the first place.

As the senior Democrat on the House Subcommittee on Education Reform, Rep. Woolsey is a key point person on all issues affecting pre-Kindergarten through 12th grade education. She is currently working on reform of the No Child Left Behind Act, to fully fund the law and make it more flexible and less punitive toward schools and school districts.

Rep. Woolsey has used her seat on the Committee on Education and the Workforce to give children and families the tools they need to realize the American Dream. She has been an advocate of special education and vocational education. She has fought against job discrimination in Head Start and other federal programs. And she authored a School Breakfast Pilot Program that was signed into law by President Clinton.

Rep. Woolsey's top domestic priority has been a legislative package called "The Balancing Act," so called because it helps parents manage the balance between work and family. Among the Balancing Act provisions: paid family leave; public pre-school for every family that wants it; major investments in child care; universal school breakfast; benefits for part-time workers; and telecommuting incentives.

Rep. Woolsey is also a senior member of the House Committee on Science, where she has worked to reduce American dependence on foreign oil and promote the use of clean, efficient energy sources. In the most recent energy bill, she was instrumental in securing over \$2 billion in renewable energy research, development, demonstration and commercial application. The energy bill also included the "Woolsey Green Building Amendment," modeled after a project in her district, which will promote the

use of renewable energy technology in public buildings. Rep. Woolsey has also introduced legislation that would add the Sonoma coastline to the National Marine Sanctuary Program, thus protecting it from oil and gas drilling.

Having raised her family in California's North Bay and lived there for over 40 years, Rep. Woolsey understands the concerns and reflects the values of Sonoma and Marin County residents. She frequently says they are the most important voice she listens to; and she not only listens, she responds. Over the years, she has helped bring home \$400 million in special projects to the 6th District. Last year's transportation bill, for example, included money for the expansion of Highway 101; a bicycle and pedestrian network for Marin County; natural gas buses in Sonoma County; and earthquake damage protection for the Golden Gate Bridge.

Rep. Woolsey has used her influence and seniority to modernize and upgrade North Bay infrastructure. Twice, she helped save the Petaluma Coast Guard Training Center from closure. She helped secure more than \$11 million for repairs that helped bring Fort Baker under the protection of the National Park Service. And she was able to get the federal money needed to build a thriving community and wetlands preserve at Hamilton Field -- the nation's first such successful conversion of a military base.

Rep. Woolsey's dedication to family issues and her belief in a strong social safety net are rooted in her personal history. As a young single mother struggling to raise three children by herself, even though she was employed she needed public assistance just to make ends meet. That experience of needing a helping hand from her government has never left her.

Eventually she worked her way off welfare and became a Human Resources Manager for a large high-tech manufacturer in Marin County. In 1980, she opened her own human resources consulting and employment agency, Woolsey Personnel Service, while finishing her bachelor's degree at the University of San Francisco. She began her public service career in 1984 when she won a seat on the Petaluma City Council, where she served until she was sworn in to the United States House of Representatives in January 1993.

Since then, 6th district voters have returned Rep. Woolsey to office six times. In 2004, she received 72.7 percent of the vote and was the actual top vote-getter (more than 226,000 votes) of all 53 California members of the House.

Rep. Woolsey was born on November 3, 1937 in Seattle, Washington. Now living in Petaluma, California, she is the mother of four grown children and a grandmother of five.

(updated 3/06)